

Parks, parking garages on officials' wish lists

By MICHAEL P. BUFFER
The Express-Times

Municipal officials have been busy in recent months putting together proposals to secure funding from the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission.

In December, the bridge commission decided to borrow \$40 million to fund projects that are outside commission property but enhance transportation near commission bridges. The money was obtained last month through a bond issue.

Three weeks ago, Easton and Phillipsburg officials announced they were making a joint request for nearly \$30 million to pay for a series of riverfront traffic and streetscape improvements. Smaller municipalities in Northampton, Bucks, Warren and Hunterdon counties are seeking funding for more modest projects.

Biegelsville is seeking \$20,000 to install a sidewalk connecting a canal bridge to its Delaware River bridge, said Tammy Macaluso, borough secretary/treasurer. Williams Township officials said

they want \$375,000 for a project to install traffic signals at the Interstate 78 interchange on Morgan Hill Road.

The bridge commission is a bi-state agency responsible for 20 Delaware River bridges from the New York state line to the three bridges that connect Trenton and Morrisville, Pa. Two bridges are for pedestrians only, and of the motor vehicle bridges, seven are toll bridges and 11 are free.

Bridge commission Chairman Philip Mugavero has appointed a four-person committee to review requests for money from the \$40 million fund. Bridge commission Executive Director Frank McCartney said the committee will meet this month "to review the application process."

McCartney said the New Jersey and Pennsylvania departments of transportation fund local projects through "similar programs." The bridge commission plans to allocate \$25 million in 2005 and \$15 million in 2006.

"It's a new venture," McCartney said. "We want to make sure we do it right."

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